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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a resource list of instructional materials that can serve as the basis for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) lessons on holidays and festivals. The paper explains that learning about holidays and festivals provides a way for English language learners to gain a better understanding of North American culture. The resources are suitable for students at various levels of proficiency and can provide resources for teachers who wish to prepare original lessons tailored to the needs of their particular classes. Resources include the following: an annotated book list; a children's book list; an annotated ESL textbook list; an annotated visual aids list; an annotated list of Internet resources; an annotated list of Web sites for ESL instruction; and an annotated list of films and videotapes. (SM)

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Holiday Resources for ESL Teachers

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Learning about holidays and festivals is an excellent way for English language learners (ELLs) to gain a better understanding of North American culture. Each celebration is unique and offers students an invaluable insight into a variety of traditions and customs that have become an integral part of the cultural heritage of both the United States and Canada. Furthermore, since ELLs are often mystified by the cycle of holiday sights and sounds that typically fill our environment throughout the year, they are usually curious and eager to learn about the celebrations.

Many teaching materials and other educational resources currently available can be drawn upon to present lessons that focus on holidays and celebrations. Besides publications designed for mainstream students, the number of books and other materials developed specifically for ELLs has been growing year by year. Moreover, with the surge in the use of the Internet for educational purposes, recent years have seen a proliferation of websites featuring holiday instructional pages. Although the vast majority of such pages have been developed for native speakers, a number of websites now offer holiday pages that have not only been designed primarily for use by ELLs, but are interactive as well.

The purpose of this resource list is to offer a succinct compilation of instructional materials that can serve as the basis for ESL lessons for students at various levels of proficiency as well as provide excellent resources for teachers who wish to prepare original lessons tailored to the needs of their particular classes. This listing does not pretend to be exhaustive, but aims to introduce teachers to the large and significant body of holiday instructional resources currently available at libraries and from publishers in the U. S. and Canada as well as resources available online.

This is an updated version of a resource list distributed during the session "Building language skills and acculturation through holidays," presented at the TESOL 2001 Conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

Books

Chase's Calendar of Events. Chases@tribune.com.
A 736-page day-by-day directory to holidays, historical anniversaries, fairs, festivals and special days, weeks and months. Published annually. An accompanying CD-ROM for Windows & Mac is available. Website: www.altaesl.com

Johnson, Betty Kracht. *Building Sight Vocabulary, Book 2*. Steck-Vaughn, 1998.
Reproducible pages of high interest stories that focus on holiday celebrations. Although written on the first grade reading level, can be used with ESL students in higher grades. Good source of texts that can be the basis of ESL lessons.

Newmann, Dana. *The Compleat Teacher's Almanack, A Daily Guide to All 12 Months of the Year*. MJF Books, 1997.
A comprehensive, virtually inexhaustible resource for ideas, classroom activities, and ready-to-use materials for the elementary school teacher.

Children's Books

This section includes primarily children's books that present holiday concepts, customs, and vocabulary rather than stories that presuppose a prior knowledge of the celebrations.

DePaola, Tomie. *Baby's First Christmas*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988.

_____. *My First Easter*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1990.

_____. *My First Halloween*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1991.

_____. My *First Thanksgiving*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1992.

Drew, Rosa. *Celebrating Chinese New Year: Nick's New Year*. Creative Teaching Press, Inc., 1999.

Gibbons, Gail. *Halloween*. Holiday House, 1989

_____. *Thanksgiving Day*. Holiday House, 1988.

_____. *Valentine's Day*. Holiday House, 1986.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Celebrating Chinese New Year*. Holiday House, 1998.

Kupperstein, Joel. *Celebrating Easter: The Easter Egg Hunt*. Creative Teaching Press, Inc., 1999.

Marx, David F. *Christmas*. Children's Press, 2000.

_____. *Halloween*. Children's Press, 2000.

_____. *Kwanzaa*. Children's Press, 2000.

_____. *New Year's Day*. Children's Press, 2000.

_____. *Thanksgiving*. Children's Press, 2000.

Urmston, Kathleen and Karne Evans. *Looking for Halloween.* Kaeden Corp., 1991.

Vasquez, Sarah. *Cinco de Mayo.* Steck-Vaughn, 1999.

Ziefert, Harriet. *Halloween Parade.* Puffin Books, 1992.

ESL Textbooks

Claire, Elizabeth. *ESL Teacher's Holiday Activities Kit.* The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1990.
Designed for children, this book is a collection of reproducible activity pages that focus on all of the popular American holidays, customs and special events.

Drews, Donna Anthony. *Looking at American Holidays: A Pictorial Introduction to American Language and Culture.* National Textbook Co., 1990.
The emphasis here is on graphics; accompanying reading passages are brief.

Graham, Carolyn. *Holiday Jazz Chants.* Oxford, 1999.
Offers 50 songs and chants that focus on major holidays. Musical notation is provided for each song, and a recording of the songs and chants is available on cassette or CD.

Josel, Carol A. *Ready to Use ESL Activities for Every Month of the School Year.* Center for Applied Research in Education, 1994.
Over 200 reproducible activities organized by the month, tying into seasons, holidays and other events. Appropriate for grades K-8.

Kennedy, James H. *Contemporary's Celebrate With Us: A Beginning ESL Reader of Holidays and Festivals.* McGraw-Hill/Contemporary Books, 1995.
For high beginning students, this text contains 22 self-contained units, each with a key vocabulary list and reading passage followed by a series of comprehension, vocabulary , and writing exercises as well as think-and-discuss activities.

Klebanow, Barbara and Sara Fischer. *American Holidays: Exploring Traditions, Customs and Backgrounds.* Pro Lingua Associates, 1986.
Designed for high intermediate and advanced students, this text stresses vocabulary development. Includes an answer key, glossary, and bibliography.

Langevin, Donna, et al. *I Love Holidays!: Canadian Celebrations.* Canadian Resources for ESL, 1998.
Written at a grade three reading level, this text is for high beginners. Readings are accompanied by a variety of meaningful exercises and illustrations. Of the 13 holidays included, 11 are celebrated in the U.S.

Office of Language Programs, U. S. Department of State. *Celebrate! Holidays in the U. S. A.*
A reader for high intermediate and advanced students. With focus on how American holidays are commemorated, units include historical background, glossaries, and many illustrations. Distributed by Alta Book Center. Not available in the USA; orders must be shipped to addresses outside the country. Website: www.altaesl.com

Porter, Catherine, et al. *Holidays in the U. S. A.: An Interactive ESL Reader*. ScottForesman, 1991.
For high beginning or low intermediate students, this text offers reading passages, comprehension exercises as well as conversation practice and lyrics to songs. Includes an answer key.

Sharfstein, Chana Anna. *From Near and Far: An ESL Holiday Workbook*. American English Publications, Inc.
This book presents holiday themes through activities and simple reading exercises designed for young learners, kindergarten-3rd grade. Includes numerous hands-on and TPR activities.

Tiersky, Ethel and Martin Tiersky. *The U. S. A.: Customs and Institutions*. Longman, 2001.
Written for secondary students, this text is an excellent resource for elementary ESL instructors. See Unit 7, "American Holidays: History and Customs" and Appendix A, "A snapshot of More American Holidays."

Tomscha, Terry. *American Customs and Traditions*. Longman, 1990.
An intermediate level reader with colorful graphics but no follow-up exercises.

Visual Aids

Éditions Soleil Publishing Inc. produces a series of word picture posters that focus on the following holidays: Thanksgiving, Halloween, Valentine's Day, Easter, Christmas. Posters are available in English and 20 other languages. Website: www.soleilpublishing.com

Langston, Leila A. *Carousel of Ideas* (set 2). Ballard & Tighe, 1995.
Colorful flashcards for major hoidays are grouped in two units of this ESL language arts program: "Months of the Year" and "Holidays, Festivals, and Seasons."

Lobeto, Ceres and Ivete Morcilo. *Special Days Series*. Special Book Services (São Paulo, Brazil).
Packets of materials (banners, flashcards, mini posters) to be used for hands0on classroom activities. Each packet focuses on a single holiday: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. Instruction manual offers step-by-step directions in English, Portuguese, and Spanish. Website: www.sbs.com.br

Peachey, Bobbie, ed. *Web Clip Art: Holidays and Special Occasions*.
Website: http://webclipart.about.com/internet/webclipart/msubmenu33.htm
A good source of web sites of clip art that can be used to illustrate lessons.

Williams, Constance. *Let's Celebrate!* Ballard & Tighe.
Multicultural theme units with creative writing and critical thinking activities. Each unit contains 6 mini-posters, accompanying sentence commands, and a teacher's guide. Available in 2 sets of 5 units each. Set 1: Halloween, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, The Fourth of July, Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo. Set 2: Valentine's Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Las Posadas. Website: www.ballard-tighe.com/

Internet Resources

General web sites (not specifically for ESL instruction)

Puzzlemaker
http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/
A puzzle and games generation tool that lets visitors create and print customized word searches and crossword puzzles. Users can also print mazes created around holiday topics.

Two comprehensive listings of sites offering general information on holidays:
Yahoo Holidays and Observances
http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Holidays_and_Observances/
Netscape Holidays
http://search.netscape.com/browse.psp?cp=nrpus&id=468830

BlackDog Loves Holidays
http://www.blackdog.net/holiday.html
Info and activities for children including games, puzzles, holiday screen savers and wallpaper.

Billy Bear's Playground: Holidays
http://www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/fun.htm
Activities and online games for children plus links to other holiday sites.

Cathy's Picnic
http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/7134/index.html
Focusing on Christmas, Easter, Halloween only, this site offers information, stories and activities for kids.

ChildFun Holiday Activities
http://childfun.com/themes/holiday z.shtml
Holiday activities for lower elementary grade classrooms.

Christmas & Santa Claus Fun Games and Activities
http://www.syvum.com/fun/christmas/
A variety of interactive Christmas activities.

Elementary Educators Holiday Site
http://k-6educators.about.com/sitesearch.htm?terms=holidays
Links to many sites of activities for elementary school students

Holiday Lesson Plans and Activities
http://members.aol.com/Donnpages/Holidays.html#PAT
In addition to lesson plans, this site includes holiday histories, descriptions, worksheets, activities, interactive games, art projects, clip art.

The Holiday Spot
http://www.theholidayspot.com/
Covers all holidays, providing history, greeting cards, holiday wallpapers, recipes, jokes, games, crafts, and other activities.

Holidays Center of Education World
http://www.education-world.com/holidays/
Ideas, activities, and resources for teaching about the major US holidays. Includes crafts, clipart, games, recipes, as well as links to other sites.

Holidays on the Net
http://www.holidays.net/
Provides a comprehensive listing of links to sites focusing on holidays and celebrations.

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators – Holiday Information
http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/holidays.html
Provides links to sites that focus on major holidays including Chinese New Year, Christmas, Halloween, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, St. Patrick's Day and Valentine's Day.

Kid's Domain Holidays
http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/
Holiday and seasonal fun for kids - downloads, clip art, online games, printable puzzles, crafts, recipes.

Mrs. Vig's Themes Page
http://www.angelfire.com/ma/1stGrade/index.html
These themes, arranged by the month, are appropriate for presenting all the major holidays in lower elementary grades.

Scholastic Lesson Plans and Reproducibles
http://teacher.scholastic.com/
A variety of activities and resources for holiday lessons throughout the year. Grouped in categories PreK-2, 3-5, and 6-8. In the social studies window, select holidays.

Sheryl's Holiday Site
http://www.sherylfranklin.com/holidays/
Primarily a listing of many links to other holiday sites.

Web Holidays
http://www.web-holidays.com/holidays.htm
Information about popular, state, religious, and other holidays from around the globe.

The Wilstar Holiday Page
http://wilstar.com/holidays
Descriptions of major holidays , includes historical background and links to other sites.

Web sites for ESL instruction

Dave's ESL Café Idea Cookbook: Holidays
http://www.eslcafe.com/ideas/sefer.cgi?Holidays:
A variety of holiday activities for ESL classes. Focuses on Christmas, Halloween, and New Year's Day only.

English as a 2nd Language with Kenneth Beare: Holidays
http://esl.about.com/sitesearch.htm?terms=holidays
Copious listing of links to sites focusing on holidays for ESL students.

English Online: Holidays
http://eleaston.com/holidays.html
Sites included here are appropriate primarily for advanced students.

ESL American Holiday Review
http://trackstar.scrtec.org/main/display.php3?option=frames&track_id=567
Includes lesson plans, coloring pages, poetry, music and other activities for Halloween and Thanksgiving.

ESL Quizzes: Holidays, etc.
http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~iteslj/quizzes/holidays.html
Self-study online quizzes in three levels of difficulty

Everything ESL
http://www.everythingesl.net/lessons/
Includes lesson plans for Thanksgiving, Winter Celebrations, Santa Claus Around the World, as well as activities for St. Patrick's Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Independence Day.

The Holiday Zone
http://www.theholidayzone.com/
Includes language activities, readings, bibliographies, games, and links to other sites.

Holidays and Seasonal Information
http://deil.lang.uiuc.edu/web.pages/holidays/purpose.html
Compiled for students at the Intensive English Institute of the Univ. of Illinois, this site offers links to sites prepared for native speakers. Appropriate for very advanced students only.

Holidays in the U. S.
http://www.eskimo.com/~cjh/esl/book1/chap2.html
Brief, succinct descriptions of major U.S. holidays. Appropriate for upper intermediate students.

Films/Videos

America's Special Days (1994)
This series, appropriate for grades K-3, supports teachers in helping students understand and appreciate why we celebrate certain holidays. Each program is 15 minutes in length. Includes: 1)New Year's Days, 2) Martin Luther King Day/Black History Month, 3) Presidents' Day, 4) Women's History Month, 5) Arbor Day/Earth Day, 6) Memorial Day/Veterans Day, 7) Flag Day/Citizenship Day, 8) Independence Days(s), 9) Native American Day, 10) Thanksgiving Day
Distributed by Great Plains National, P.O. Box 80669, Lincoln, NE 68501-0669; Phone: 800-228-4630;
Website: www.gpn.unl.edu

Holiday Facts and Fun (1992-98)
With a multicultural approach, these programs provide history, stories, and traditions associated with patriotic, ethnic and religious holidays. Each program is 12 minutes in length and is appropriate for grades 1-4. Includes: 1) Columbus Day, 2) President's Day, 3) Halloween, 4) Thanksgiving, 5) A Multicultural Christmas, 6) Hanukkah, 7) Kwanzaa, 8) Valentine's Day, 9) Martin Luther King Day, 10) St. Patrick's Day, 11) Earth Day, 12) flag Day, 13) Cinco de Mayo
Distributed by Chariot Distribution, 1274 Lambert Circle, Lafayette, CO 80026; Phone: 303-666-4558;
Website: www.chariotdist.com

Holidays for Children (1996)
This video series, appropriate for grades K-4, explores the customs, symbols, rituals, and folklore underlying major holidays. Each video is 30 in length. The series includes: 1) Arbor Day, 2) Chinese New Year, 3) Christmas, 4) Cinco de Mayo, 5) Easter, 6) Election Day, 7) Halloween, 8) Hanukkah/Passover, 9) Independence Day, 10) Kwanzaa, 11) Pow Wow, 12) Ramadan, 13) Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur, 14) St. Patrick's Day, 15) Thanksgiving, 16 Valentine's Day
Distributed by Schlessinger Video Productions; also by Asia for Kids: 4480 Lake Forest Dr., Suite 302, Cincinnati, OH 45242-3726.

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